

## Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01 SAB-01 SAM-01 DPW-01 /098 W

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P R 081652Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2688

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR

UNCLAS MADRID 5554

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, SP, MO, SS

SUBJ: MILITARY LEADER'S COMMENTS ON SAHARA AND DETENTION OF  
SPANISH OFFICERS

1. LT. GEN. VALLESPIN, CHIEF OF HIGH GENERAL STAFF, VISITED SPANISH SAHARA AUGUST 5-7. IN PRESS CONFERENCE IN EL AAIUN, VALLESPIN ATTRIBUTED ATTACKS ON FRONTIER POSTS TO QUOTE SPECIALIZED ELEMENTS MORE OR LESS LINKED WITH ROYAL MOROCCAN ARMY UNQUOTE. HE DESCRIBED INCIDENTS AS QUOTE HARRASSMENT ACTIONS, NOT GENUINE ATTACKS, AIMED MORE TO CAUSE NERVOUSNESS RATHER THAN TO OCCUPY POSITIONS. OUR SITUATION DOES NOT ALLOW US TO RESPOND TO LEVEL OF THESE SKIRMISHES WITH DISPROPORTIONATE VIOLENCE UNQUOTE.

2. IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH CORRESPONDENT OF MADRID'S INDEPENDENT "YA" NEWSPAPER, VALLESPIN SAID CANARY ISLANDS WOULD HAVE EVEN MORE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE IN FUTURE ONCE SAHARA WAS DECOLONIZED. HE SAID GOS WOULD MAINTAIN ITS MILITARY  
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POSTURE IN CANARIES, SAYING THAT THIS WAS ONE OF REASONS FOR

CREATION OF CANARY ISLAND THEATER COMMAND.

3. VALLESPIN ADDED THAT GOS HAD MADE DEFINITIVE DECISION TO LEAVE SAHARA. QUOTE IF WE DECIDE AGAINST LEAVING, WE WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY EXCOMMUNICATED BY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION UNQUOTE. IF MOROCCO DID NOT ACCEPT SELF-DETERMINATION OF SAHARA, UN COMTINGENTS WOULD HAVE TO INTERVENE.

4. WITH RESPECT TO SPANISH ARMY PRISONERS IN HANDS OF "F POLISARIO." VALLESPIN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN THEIR RELEASE. HE NOTED THE PRISONERS WERE ON TERRITORY OF "COUNTRY FAVORING SELF-DETERMINATION IN SAHARA," (ALGERIA). HE OVSERVED THAT QUOTE F POLISARIO UNQUOTE HAD BEEN LESS ACTIVE RECENTLY AND SPECULATED THEY MAY HAVE REALIZED SPAIN WAS DEFENDING SELF-DETERMINATION.

5. ASKED ABOUT DETENTION IN MADRID OF NINE SPANISH MILITARY OFFICERS, VALLESPIN SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO RECALL ADMONITIONS OF ARMED FORCES' MINISTERS ABOUT MILITARY NONINVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS. THE MATTER WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CAPTAIN GENERAL OF MADRID AND VALLESPIN WAS NOT ON TOP OF THE PARTICULARS. AT ALL EVENTS, OWING TO THE LARGE MASS OF OFFICERS IN ARMED FORCES, TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE SHOULD NOT BE ATTACHED TO ACTIVITIES OF SMALL GROUP.  
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